

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1612

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, LE

SUBJ: SOVIET PRESS ON LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 7863

1. SOVIET PRESS HAS ESSENTIALLY PORTRAYED THE RECENT
INSTABILITY IN LEBANON AS A PHALANGIST-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT.
PRESS PREDICTABLY HAS CAST PHALANGISTS--CHARACTERIZED AS
REACTIONARY--AS CULPABLE INSTIGATORS OF FIGHTING. BY
CONTRAST THE PALESTININAS AND THE LEFT HAVE FALLEN WHOLLY
ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS.

2. SOVIET COMMENT HAS BEEN CAUTIONS ABOUT COMMUNISTS'
ROLE. JUMBLATT'S CHARGES THAT PHALANGIST ACTIONS
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SERVED "IMPERIALIST" AND ISRAELI DESIGNS WERE WIDELY
REPORTED. HOWEVER, THE JOINT STATEMENT DISCUSSED IN

REFTEL WAS NOT CARRIED BY MOSCOW'S MAJOR DAILIES, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO OVERT SOVIET CALL FOR AN INCREASED POLITICAL ROLE FOR THE CPL. MOSCOW WELCOMED THE OUSTER OF THE SHORT-LIVED MILITARY GOVERNMENT, BUT CAREFULLY AVOIDED TOUTING THE LEBANESE CP IN FAVOR OF EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR ARAB UNITY.

3. COMMENT: THE SOVIETS' PORTRAYAL OF THE BEIRUT FIGHTING AS A RIGHTIST-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT WITHIN BROADER CONTEXT OF THE MIDDLE EAST STRUGGLE HAS EFFECTIVELY SOFT-PEDALED THE QUESTION OF LEBANESE CP OPTIONS IN THE CURRENT CRISIS. THIS APPARENT RELUCTANCE TO PRESS FOR POSSIBLE COMMUNIST ADVANCES IN LEBANON IS CONSISTENT WITH MOSCOW'S USUAL CAUTIOUS LINE IN PUBLIC REGARDING OVERT COMMUNIST MOVES TO SEIZE ROLE IN NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS.
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